

/18 cont. /

157 39. Also flour from a different sack, although tangentially
461 related to what we are dealing with, is the matter of a lack
of initiative, lack of ambition, and a lack of appetite for
certain temporal well-being, to which they are not accustomed
and which consequently they do not miss which should not
justly surprise us, since we should never forget that man is a
creature of customs. In this sense it is true that the Indian,
without realizing it, seems to repeat the adage, which the
Holy Books put in the mouth of the fool: "Better is a handful
with rest than both hands full with work and vexation of spirit.
(Ecclesiastes IV, 6.)

40. For the correct solution of the problem stated, we
must keep most in mind that the place where the Indians live
ought to be pondered, since not in vain is it said to us that
geography is one of the eyes necessary in every treatise on or
study of man.

147 a) Obviously in hot climates nobody can carry on the
same activity as in cold ones. The wise Creator did not give
to the animals of the tropics the same instinct for frugality or
storing up that he gave to their congeners in other climates.

251 b) Tropical fruits, in general, cannot be stored, but
261 must be consumed at once: thus the more or less remote
tendency to gluttony.

251 c) The lack of salt similarly does not allow them to store
263 up provisions of the meat of animals for a long time and thus
to ration its consumption. Hung game /mosqueadas/ meat
or meat cured only with fire does not last indefinitely like
salted meat.

221 d) The nonexistence of seasons of strong contrast and well
defined does not help man in these lands to precise calculation,
thus great abundance and squandering may frequently be
followed by great shortage.

● 433 e) The enormous isolation from centers of commerce, as
a final evil, does not allow them to cultivate anything except
what they themselves /19/ are going to consume. In general,

/20 cont. /

461 like the tapui amuenín and mua akenín (builder of houses and
538 organizer of agricultural work), there are the kamí tarén
(one who lives in his hammock) and the tereutasén naké (the
eternal stroller-about), who cannot relax because he has a
pointed stick in his critical part, and the karán (traveler),
who often turns out to be a karán-karán (head insect), who lives
[126] off the work of others. Precisely on the subject of these last
a few days ago I received a drawing from one of those educated
in our boarding school in San Francisco de Luepa, with the
following expressive caption: Kamí tarenkon, iuantón,

"Those who live in the hammock, live hungry."

114
● 433 43. For more proof I want to transcribe Dr. Simpson's
461 words in his work Los Kamarakotos, page 541, on this same
subject, since we are in complete agreement. "The Kamara-
koto have a very definite standard of living which almost all
of them attain. They work hard to maintain a home of their
own, with a good house, adequate conuco /fields/, hammocks,
baskets, and all of the goods that they need, personal adorn-
ments, and other items of property inherent in their way of
life.

"When these necessities are for the moment satisfied, /21/
the Indians relax and have fun. The heaping up of wealth,
saving for the future, and any accumulation of goods that is
not for daily use is not even attempted. Only in this sense
can they be considered true loafers.

"Bearing in mind their standard, they have abundant energy
that they display when, by this same standard, they have any
reason whatsoever to work; it is ~~this~~ completely unjust to
[462] apply to them the term idlers." "Neither is it true, say what
you will about other Indians, that the Kamarakoto assign to
their women an inequitable portion of the work."

200 44. Whence, then, it will be said, the backwardness
and lack of culture of these Indians? I am the first to recognize
and to touch with my own hands the lack of culture and

123 While we were camped near Uruyén as many as forty Indian visitors
 574 were sometimes present at Uruyén at one time and every structure there was
 573 crowded with hammocks, including the wall-less B, although Kamarakotos
 784 dislike sleeping without walls, but even under this pressure no one occupied F
 or G or used them for any purpose.

Food

262 The Kamarakotos will eat practically everything available in their region
 433 from which humans can extract any nourishment, but their main reliance is on
 241 agriculture. Wild food, plant and animal, plays a valued part in their diet
 but its failure is not fatal. Cultivated plants are the staple foods, and their
 failure means starvation. Contrary to the general impression, it is extremely
 difficult and precarious to live off the country in the tropical jungles and
 sabanas. The Kamarakotos must be classed as agricultural Indians.

Plant Foods and Farming.

222 Wild plant food is relatively unimportant and forms only an insignificant
 262 addition to the Kamarakoto diet. At least four non-poisonous mushrooms are
 known and eaten. I did not hear of any wild roots or seeds that are commonly
 eaten. There are a few, surprisingly few, wild fruits that are enjoyed in season,
 including the fruits of the maripa and moriche palms, called aba and kwai
 respectively, and several sorts of guamos, pods with a sweetish edible pulp sur-
 rounding the hard seeds (warwoto, maipa, abira), and the algarrobo (wadé)
 with somewhat similar pods with a powdery edible substance around the seeds.
 These with a fruit called made that I did not identify are almost all the wild
 plants that provide food.

241 Cultivated food plants, on the other hand, are numerous and varied.
 Some plants, food and otherwise, are generally planted more or less at random
 around the houses, notably gourds, cotton, and pupu (a shrub with spiny leaves
 and a fleshy fruit that looks like a golden-yellow tomato). Agriculture, proper-
 ly speaking, is carried out by a system of mixed, temporary farm-patches, a
 wasteful and inefficient type of farming that has been taken over from the
 Indians and is common throughout Venezuela where such patches are called
 "conucos."

241 The Kamarakoto conuco, uma, is invariably located in the forest, but
 311 usually near its edge. The reason for this is that the forest has become estab-
 134 lished wherever there is rich soil leaving only the poor, sandy soil open and
 128 grass-covered. At Uruyén the to'-esa, Reyes, in an unusual experimental
 mood, cleared a patch of sabana and planted casave¹⁰⁷ on it, but when we left
 107 [see footnote on p. 19, category 116 - Analyst]

224 identification of these animals). These are the staple food animals, as nearly
 262 as any can so be called. Capybaras, kapi:ba, armadillos, atsi:gamo, merum,
 and mauraima, and anteaters, waremg, are sometimes eaten but are not so
 [261] specifically hunted. Monkeys, carnivores, sloths, opossums, and the small
 rodents are not regularly hunted or eaten except in times of food scarcity.
 Some allied Indians, even among the Arekunas, regularly eat monkeys but
 most of the Kamarakotos expressed distaste for monkey flesh.

In spite of the variety of food mammals available, it seems in fact to be
 relatively rare to obtain one and their meat, however much enjoyed when ob-
 tained, is not a staple. Few mammal bones are seen around the houses and the
 Indians do not claim to be able to procure such game regularly. 110

223 Birds are more often procured, but still not regularly. They range from
 262 the large okira and karmaiba down to the tiny kamata. The principal sorts
 eaten will be found in the Vocabulary. 1

224 Among reptiles and amphibians only the tortoises and the larger lizards,
 228 ayamaka, are ordinarily eaten, and these not often. ayamaka-eggs are an
 262 eagerly sought delicacy when in season and the eggs of practically all the larger
 wild birds are also eaten. Most Indians eat crocodilians and the absence of
 these from the Kamarakoto diet is perhaps due rather to rarity and difficulty of
 capture than to distaste.

222 Among insects the large ant-like bachacos, kaiba⁹, are eaten as are
 262 some larvae found in palm trees, tsiya⁹ and two. Other insects may be eaten
 in times of need but are not regular items of diet. Wild honey, tautsan-yeului,
 [231] is much prized but is not abundant enough to be a staple. I did not hear of any
 [237] attempts to domesticate bees. Honey is also used for tattooing and beeswax for
 fastening blowguns together, coating quivers, etc.

Hunting.

224 Hunting, carried on only by men, is a favorite occupation but probably
 [462] not a very productive one. One would anticipate that such Indians would be
 ● [433] skillful hunters and certainly all the men engage in this and have abundant
 paraphernalia for it and many tales of their prowess, but as far as I could check
 [122] the actual performance it is not impressive. For instance we employed suc-
 cessively two men who were agreed to be the best hunters in the tribe, arranged
 for them to have all their time for this, gave them whatever they wished in the
 way of ammunition, and offered extra prizes for any unusual success, but one
 of them did not succeed in getting any game and the other drew blank most days
 and in a week he got only one animal, an acure, that could be considered a
 [262] success from the point of view of pot-hunting. I have already remarked on the
 [411] evidence that animal food is more a treat than a regular item of diet. We were
 also unimpressed by such examples of marksmanship, with their weapons or with
 ours, as we saw.

110 [see foot note on pp 319-20, category 116 - Analysis]

7 [see vocabulary on pp 59-61, category 116 - Analysis]

411
284

Fig. 15 — Kamarakoto Bow.

A, the whole bow from the side, unstrung.

B, end showing attachment of bowstring
(to right) and re-enforcing string (to left).

C, cross section near middle, bowstring to right.

224
 ● [433] ours, as we saw. In short, these are agricultural Indians and their hunting has
 more the aspect of a diversion than of a gainful occupation.

411
 177 They claimed to have about fifteen shotguns in the tribe, but most of
 these are probably never fired. We saw two or three, old muzzle-loaders traded
 in from Brazil, the Guianas, or northern Venezuela. Practically all the Indians
 of this general region acquired a few guns long ago, before any civilized per-
 sons had ever visited them, but powder and shot have always been rare and ex-
 pensive and the guns are reserved for great occasions or are articles of pure
 luxury. They have never become every-day weapons.

685 added) to be sufficiently compensated by the forceable recovery of the stolen objects or of others of equal value, without any penalty. Within the central group theft must, however, necessarily be rare because it could hardly fail of instant detection. 170 The wholly non-Indian punishment of imprisonment is unknown, and the Indian punishments of whipping and of biting by ants were also said not to be in use here.

673 No actions other than physical injury, trespass (particularly on fishing waters), and theft were specifically cited as criminal and of conceivable occurrence. Voluntary cohabitation among the unmarried is not criminal, or even reprehensible, and rape and adultery are claimed to be unknown (a most unlikely statement, but no other information was obtainable). It should, however, be recalled that at least one non-Indian traveler is rumored to have been executed for rape or seduction, but this was generally denied, as it probably would be, whether true or not. In such a culture and community most of the crimes on our statute books are nearly or quite impossible: fraud could hardly ever be successful, debts are seldom contracted and early payment could not be avoided if possible at all, and there are no taxes, licenses, or any of the other hundred and one fruitful causes of crimes and misdemeanors in more complex cultures.

858 It might be noted here also that in such cases as we saw the minor misdemeanors of children were not punished in any way and such punishment was said to be neither necessary nor customary.

Trade

433 The Kamarakotos do not have and, as far as one can judge from present conditions, have never had a completely self-contained economy. It is true that they could survive and even live comfortably on the products of their own region and their own labor, but it is also true that they do not and that the necessity would mean a marked change in their way of life. Nor is this true simply because they now use some non-Indian materials and articles. They also require various products to be obtained from other Indian tribes. It is certain that the Guiana tribes in general had well established trade routes and a far-flung system of inter-tribal trade long before white men appeared. This trade still flourishes.

437 All trade is by barter, in the truest sense. The parties normally exchange things that each wants for his own use at the moment, not accepting articles that serve as tokens for further exchange or that are to be kept for future use. The only advance beyond this basic type of barter is that intermediate barter is also practiced to some extent. An Indian will accept or even seek something that he himself does not want at the moment, but only if he knows that he can

170 [see footnote on p. 327, category 116 - Analyst]